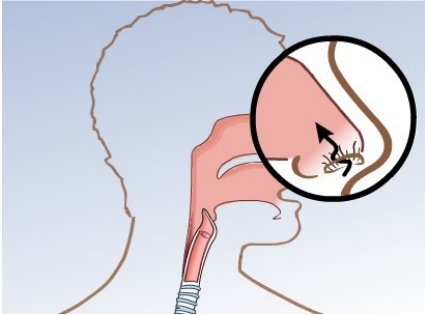


# The Respiratory System—Protection

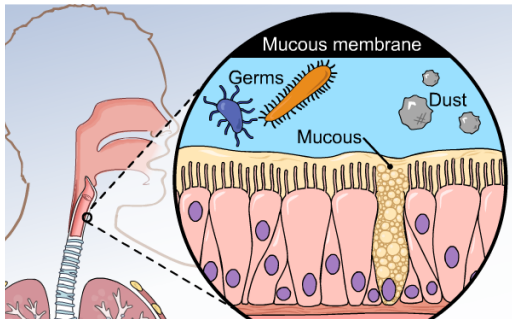
## Protection of the Respiratory System

Infectious agents such as bacteria and viruses can enter our bodies in the air that we breathe. A healthy respiratory system has several mechanisms to protect against infection:



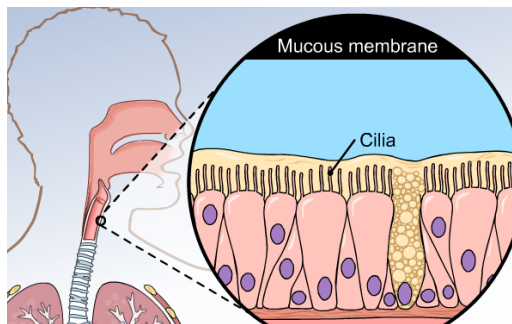
### Nose

The hairs in your nose filter the air that you breathe.



### Mucus

A slippery, sticky fluid that lines your airways and lungs. Mucus traps dirt and germs.



### Cilia

Fine hair-like structures that cover the airways. The waving motion of the cilia moves mucus up so that you can cough or swallow to get rid of it.

These protective mechanisms may not work well in people with lung disease. For example, you may produce too much mucus which actually becomes a breeding ground for infection, or your cilia may not be able to move the mucus. It is very important to learn how to prevent, recognize and treat respiratory infections.

Learn and practice pulmonary hygiene techniques such as **controlled coughing** or **huff coughing** to clear your airways of mucus.